



TIMELINE UN SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM 1992 - November 2015

Prepared by Lydia Swart for the Center for UN Reform Education. For a more detailed and analytical account, see the Center's 2013 publication on www.centerforunreform.org/?q=node/604. Links to documents and meeting reports can be found on www.centerforunreform.org/?q=securitycouncil.

1992

A/RES/47/62, 11 December 1992. Security Council reform was added to the agenda of the General Assembly's 48th Session. The operative part reads:

1. Requests the Secretary-General to invite Member States to submit, not later than 30 June 1993, written comments on a possible review of the membership of the Security Council;
2. Also requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, for its consideration, a report containing comments made by Member States on the subject;
3. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-eighth session the item entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council".

India and 35 other members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) had pushed for the reform, later joined by Japan.

1993

The Secretary General's report with Member States' proposals was distributed in the summer of 1993 (A/48/264, Add.1-10). It resulted in resolution **A/RES/48/26** of 3 December 1993, establishing the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG). The operative part reads:

Mindful of the importance of reaching general agreement,

1. Decides to **establish an Open-ended Working Group** to consider all aspects of the question of increase in the membership of the Security Council, and other matters related to the Security Council;
2. Requests the Open-ended Working Group to submit a report on the progress of its work to the General Assembly before the end of its forty-eighth session;
3. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-ninth session an item entitled "**Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters**".

Positions immediately included expansion with new permanent and/or non-permanent seats as well as a new category of elected seats with a longer term than 2 years. Veto restraint and improvements in the Council's working methods were also brought up.

1997

Paper by the PGA/Chairman of the OEWG, Ismail Razali, in the form of a draft resolution was distributed on 20 March 1997. The resolution called for adding five permanent and four non-permanent seats. New permanent seats: two from industrialized countries, 1 from African developing countries, 1 from Asian developing countries, 1 from GRULAC developing countries. It did not include extension of



veto power to new seats. After 10 years the situation could be reviewed. Also contained language on improved working methods. Italy and NAM were key to halting effort.

1998

A/RES/53/30, 1 December 1998. Counter push to Razali’s effort:

Mindful of Chapter XVIII of the Charter of the United Nations and of the importance of reaching general agreement as referred to in resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993, **determines not to adopt any resolution or decision on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, without the affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the Members of the General Assembly.**

2000

Millennium Summit, final document, excerpt:

4. In the United Nations Millennium Declaration, Heads of State and Government resolved, in respect of ongoing deliberations on Security Council reform, to intensify their efforts to achieve comprehensive reform of the Council in all its aspects (see General Assembly resolution 55/2, annex, para. 30).

2004

A/59/565, 2 December 2004

Then SG Kofi Annan - under the agenda item “Follow-up to the Millennium Summit” - distributes the report from the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change: *A more secure world: Our shared responsibility*, in preparation for the 2005 World Summit. On Security Council reform it **proposes two models, A & B**. Excerpts from the High-level Panel’s report:

252. **Model A provides for six new permanent seats, with no veto being created, and three new two-year term non-permanent seats**, divided among the major regional areas as follows:

| Region | #States | Permanent seats (continuing) | Proposed new permanent seats | Proposed two-year seats (non-renewable) | Total |
|------------------|---------|------------------------------|------------------------------|---|-------|
| Africa | 53 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Asia and Pacific | 56 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| Europe | 47 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| Americas | 35 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 6 |
| Total model A | 191 | 5 | 6 | 13 | 24 |

253. **Model B provides for no new permanent seats but creates a new category of eight four-year renewable-term seats and one new two-year nonpermanent (and non-renewable) seat**, divided among the major regional areas as follows:



| Region | #States | Permanent seats (continuing) | Proposed four-year renewable seats | Proposed two-year seats (non-renewable) | Total |
|------------------|---------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|-------|
| Africa | 53 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Asia and Pacific | 56 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| Europe | 47 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 6 |
| Americas | 35 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| Total model B | 191 | 5 | 8 | 11 | 24 |

...

255. The Panel was strongly of the view that **no change to the composition of the Security Council should itself be regarded as permanent or unchallengeable in the future. Therefore, there should be a review of the composition of the Security Council in 2020**, including, in this context, a review of the contribution (as defined in para. 249 above) of permanent and nonpermanent members from the point of view of the Council's effectiveness in taking collective action to prevent and remove new and old threats to international peace and security.

... **We also ask the permanent members, in their individual capacities, to pledge themselves to refrain from the use of the veto in cases of genocide and large-scale human rights abuses. We recommend that under any reform proposal, there should be no expansion of the veto.**

Note: These proposals collapsed two groups that are commonly used for election purposes at the UN: the Western European and Others' group and the Eastern European group.

2005

World Summit Outcome Document (WSOD): Under Section V: Strengthening the United Nations, the following language was agreed by consensus:

152. We reaffirm that Member States have conferred on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, acting on their behalf, as provided for by the Charter.

153. We support early reform of the Security Council - an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations - in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions. We commit ourselves to continuing our efforts to achieve a decision to this end and request the General Assembly to review progress on the reform set out above by the end of 2005.

154. We recommend that the Security Council continue to adapt its working methods so as to increase the involvement of States not members of the Council in its work, as appropriate, enhance its accountability to the membership and increase the transparency of its work.

For the 2005 World Summit, draft resolutions had been produced by the African Group (A/59/L.67), Group of 4 (A/59/L.64), and Uniting for Consensus (A/59/L.68), but none garnered enough support. Africa promoted permanent seats with veto rights extended immediately. The G4 (Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan) promoted permanent seats with the veto not to be used until a review would take place. UfC



preferred only adding 10 non-permanent seats. For an explanation of groupings and their key positions, see bottom of this document.

2006-2007

Two sets of facilitators appointed by the PGA produced reports, proposing transitional/intermediary/intermediate models with a number of possible solutions re a new category:

- extended seats that could be allocated for the full duration of the intermediary arrangement (first set only: including the possibility of recall)
- extended seats, which would for a longer period than the regular two-year term, but with the possibility of re-election.
- as above, but without the possibility of re-election
- (first set only:) non-permanent two-year seats with the possibility of immediate re-election.

The possibility of new permanent seats would be postponed until a review would take place. For a while there was interest from Brazil, Germany, and Japan for longer-term seats if they could transition into permanent seats at a later time, but India did not concur. Nor did Africa as a group.

September 2007

Recommendations in the report of the Open-ended Working Group (A/61/47). Excerpt:

- (d) Decides that the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council should be considered during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly so that further concrete results may be achieved, **including through intergovernmental negotiations**, building on the progress achieved so far, particularly at the sixty-first session, as well as the positions of and proposals made by Member States;

India, Brazil, Nigeria, South Africa plus an additional 20 countries threatened to submit a resolution during the closing plenary where the continuation of the OEWG had to be decided and its report approved. The resolution, L69, was withdrawn but the sponsors succeeded to have language on intergovernmental negotiations (IGN) added to the report. But the modalities of the IGN still had to be worked out, which took a year and resulted in Decision 62/557 below.

September 2008

Decision 62/557 adopted by consensus on Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. Excerpts:

- “... seeking a solution that can garner the **widest possible political acceptance** by Member States;
- (e) Further decided that **the basis** for the intergovernmental negotiations would be as follows:
 - (i) The positions and proposals of Member States, regional groups and other groupings of Member States;
 - (ii) The five key issues: categories of membership; the question of the veto; regional representation; size of an enlarged Security Council and working methods of the Council; and the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly;**
 - (iii) The following documents: report of the Open-ended Working Group on its work during the sixty-first session of the General Assembly; Assembly decision 61/561; and the report of the Open-ended Working Group on its work during the sixty-second session of the Assembly;
 - (f) Decided that the Open-ended Working Group should continue to exert efforts during the sixty-third session of the General Assembly aimed at achieving general agreement among Member States in the consideration of all issues relevant to the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council, taking into account the progress achieved during the forty-eighth to sixty-second sessions of the Assembly; ...



Probably, 62/557 has made the deliberations in the IGN even more complex than in the OEWG.

10 May 2010

Amb. Zahir Tanin from Afghanistan, Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN), distributed a “negotiation text” to Member States based on submissions from Member States. The text was 30 pages long. (See webpages of previous PGAs for various versions of the negotiation/compilation text. Revision 2 can be found in the Center’s publication from 2013, Appendix IX)

2010-2014

The negotiation/compilation text saw some revisions, but MS disagreed about Revision 2 (preferred by Africa and UfC) versus Revision 3 (preferred by G4 and L69) and on ways of streamlining the text. Tanin proposed in July 2012 that as Chair he could create a concise text, but there were objections from UfC and the African group, plus China and Russia. Tanin’s proposal for a high-level meeting was not approved either.

2011

G4 sought written support for a draft resolution that simply called for expansion with both permanent and non-permanent seats and improved working methods, without delving into details and not including all five key issues of 62/557. The draft resolution only garnered some 80 supporters, with some support conditional on agreement on the other issues. G4 afterwards claimed it was just to create momentum.

2012

L69 (which includes G4 members Brazil and India) stated at a meeting of the IGN that it wanted veto rights to be extended to new permanent seats, claiming convergence with Africa’s position. It was considered a “bluff” by some and the draft memorandum of understanding between Africa and L69 fell through. Again, this move was referred to by G4 as just another effort to create momentum.

2012

S5 (Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland) submitted a draft resolution on working methods under the agenda item dealing with follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit. The PGA asked for a legal opinion and the Office of Legal Affairs argued a.o. that working methods is one of the five key issues in the IGN and that resolution A/53/30 would apply, requiring 2/3rd of the membership for a vote. The UfC was strongly against, and especially pressure from the P5 caused the withdrawal of the resolution. The sponsors had at least a simple majority for their resolution, enough in their opinion because changing the Council’s working methods does not involve amendment of the Charter. S5 dissolved after this effort.

2013-2014

PGA John Ashe created an Advisory Group which produced a concise text. It was not accepted as a new negotiation text by Africa, UfC, and some permanent members - ostensibly for reasons related to process rather than substance. On expansion and the question of the veto the following options were listed:

- a. enlargement in both existing categories, permanent and non-permanent
- b. new category of seats of (x) years to be converted into permanent seats as well as enlargement in the non-permanent category.
- c. new category of (8-12) years that are immediately renewable without prejudice to the possibility of enlargement with non-permanent seats.
- d. new category of seats of (3-5) years and enlargement with non-permanent seats.
- e. enlargement in the non-permanent category only, with or without the possibility of immediate re-election

On the question of the veto as it relates to expansion, options included extension of the veto to new permanent members, extension of the veto but subject to a moratorium on its use for 15 years, and no



extension of the veto. Additional options concerned limiting the use of the veto for Council action to prevent or end genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes; limiting the use of the veto to Chapter VII matters; or requiring two vetoes to block action.

2014-2015

PGA Sam Kutesa did not reappoint Tanin as Chair and appointed Amb. E. Courtenay Rattray from Jamaica instead, stressing that he wanted text-based negotiations to start. Apparently the G4 had lost patience with Tanin and wanted him replaced. Rattray - after lengthy consultations - produced a one-page framework document in March 2015 and asked Member States to “populate” the text within three weeks. Between 115-120 countries made contributions, mostly in groups, some of which have overlapping memberships (see below). It was noteworthy that the large African group made a contribution. However, the Arab Group, Uniting for Consensus, China, Russian Federation, US, and Lao made objections to the process and did not want their positions to be included in the 20-pages populated framework document. Rattray added their responses in an annex.

In the summer and early fall of 2015, efforts outside the IGN to improve the Council’s effectiveness gained momentum. The successor of S5 - ACT - circulated a Code of Conduct by which its endorsers pledge not to vote against credible resolutions of the Security Council aimed at preventing or ending genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. By November, it had gained support from 106 countries, including France and the United Kingdom, but not the other three permanent members. To date, G4 members Brazil and India have not endorsed the ACT proposal either. The French proposal for voluntary veto restraint of the Council’s permanent members in case of mass atrocities is also still gaining support among the wider membership.

In August 2015, Kutesa distributed a new - but not much shorter - version of the populated framework document, with the dissenting opinions still reflected in an Annex. In September, at the plenary meeting where the continuation of the IGN had to be approved, Member States agreed that during the 70th session, the IGN would be “building on the informal meetings held during its sixty-ninth session, as well as the positions of and proposals made by Member States reflected in the text and its annex circulated by the President of the General Assembly in his letter dated 31 July 2015...” Some countries saw this as an endorsement of the text produced by Rattray and as substantive progress, while others regarded it as a mere technical roll-over decision.

In diplomatic circles it is widely understood that China leaned on the government of Jamaica to prevent Rattray’s reappointment. In October 2015, the new PGA Mogens Lykketoft appointed Amb. Sylvie Lucas of Luxembourg instead.

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Note by author: why not just have a vote?

Decision 62/557 sets out the parameters of the IGN, linking expansion of the Council with other issues (veto, regional representation, working methods, and the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly) and calling for “widest possible political acceptance.” Some interpret this phrase to mean that any solution on process as well as substance requires absolute or broad consensus. On the other hand, the G4 and L69 seem to believe that decision 62/557 cannot prevent a vote in line with relevant language of Article 108 of the UN Charter: “Amendments to the present Charter shall come into force for all Members of the United Nations when they have been adopted by a vote of two thirds of the members of the General Assembly and ratified in accordance with their respective constitutional processes by two thirds of the Members of the United Nations, including all the permanent members of the Security



Council.” A successful vote for new permanent members - with or without veto rights - may not be easy to bring about, however. There is a complex and large variety of options on the table. There are likely to be last-minute changes in national positions resulting from external pressure or new understandings. And most of all, there seems to be lack of genuine political will among the wider membership for a solution that will mostly benefit just a handful of countries whose relative power may change over time. Longer-term and renewable seats seems the most feasible and flexible option, but a vote for such a solution would likely fail too at this time. Neither a text without real negotiations or untimely votes will bring results. Only compromise can.

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Notes on the most active groupings and known positions

Exact membership of some groupings is not known and there are internal divisions on substance within each group. Some countries are part of groupings with competing or diverging stances.

The **Group of Four** (G4: Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan) advocate for a new permanent seat for each of its members, as well as two such seats for Africa. The official stance of the G4 has been the same for a long time, although five years ago, Brazil, Germany and Japan seemed open to exploring compromise models such as longer-term seats, especially if they could transition into permanent seats at a later stage. But India did not concur. In 2015 the G4 lobbied many capitals with a solution containing the following elements on expansion and the right of veto:

“Membership of the Security Council shall be enlarged in both categories, new permanent members and new non-permanent members.

Member States should continue discussion on the use of the veto in certain circumstances and, in this context, the following voluntary offer is made.

New permanent members would as a principle have the same responsibilities and obligations as current permanent members. However, new permanent members shall not exercise the veto-right until a decision on the matter has been taken during a review, to be held 15 years after the coming into force of the reform.”

This position is similar to the G4 position of 2005, and is likely to attract some African support but may not be able to change the common African position. It will probably encounter problems from those who are open to new permanent seats, but without the extension of veto rights, including some P5 members.

The African Group/C10. Although the African Group puts a common position forward in the IGN, it hides the same kind of internal divisions found in the other regions. There are self-nominated candidates (South Africa and Nigeria, among others); those that oppose them, including competing large countries and disgruntled neighbors; some that insist on veto rights to be extended as long as veto rights exist; some that are willing to compromise to bring about convergence with the G4; some that prefer rotating seats for Africa rather than permanent seats for individual countries; some that have little to gain and are quite indifferent at this point, etc.

In 2005, South Africa and Nigeria tried to bring about a convergence with the G4 that would allow a final decision on veto rights to be postponed until a future review took place. Resistance to this idea from parts of the African Union (excludes Morocco) was intense and the Committee of 10 was established to act as a focal point on SC reform and to explore convergences with other groupings. The C10 represents the five African regions and consists of Algeria, Congo Brazzaville/Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Kenya, Libya, Namibia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Zambia.



The *Ezulwini Consensus* asks for two permanent seats with veto rights for Africa - to be elected by the AU - and a total of five non-permanent seats for their region. And while the US insists on knowing which countries would be picked, the African Group has not felt a need to agree about specific candidates because real negotiations have not taken place thus far in the IGN. And there is always the risk that Africa will get just one permanent seat, or that the solution of longer-term and/or renewable seats would turn out to be the only viable outcome. Hybrid options, such as a permanent seat for Africa plus longer-term seats for Africa and other regions, are not being explored, although many Member States recognize that Africa especially should benefit from expansion.

In 2012, a growing convergence between the C10 and L69 seemed to be taking place after the L69 grouping changed its position to include veto rights for new permanent seats to be extended immediately. However, efforts to agree on a memorandum of understanding fell through. Suspicions that L69's new position was a mere ploy to break up the African position were rife at the time and some L69 members would openly admit that the 2012 L69 draft resolution was just an effort to create momentum. It seems that most of the 11 African members of L69 are willing to be more flexible about veto rights, belonging to the South African and Nigerian camps. Moreover, the 2012 L69 and 2013 CARICOM draft resolutions included the promise of a dedicated non-permanent and cross-regional seat for small island developing states, which could further complicate matters.

The five *permanent members* do not agree on a solution. The United Kingdom publicly favors new permanent seats for the G4 and two African countries, but without the extension of veto rights. France seems open to the aspirations of the G4 and Africa, including veto rights. Permanent members China, Russian Federation, and the US publicly favor moderate expansion with some new permanent members, but they do not agree on which countries exactly, which might be intentional by making it even harder to find a solution. These three permanent members are unlikely to agree on the extension of veto rights or to leave it to the rest of the UN membership to elect new permanent members.

The *Uniting for Consensus* (UfC) group is opposed to adding any new permanent seats. Instead, they have advocated for adding only non-permanent seats or a new category of longer-term seats. Currently, this grouping is believed to favor possible terms of three or four years that could be immediately renewed once without an interval. Its members consist of regional rivals of the G4 and others espousing principled objections to permanent seats. Like any grouping it experiences internal divisions, with some being more flexible than others. It has a core membership of about a dozen members (Italy is the focal point and others are believed to be Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Malta, Mexico, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, San Marino, Spain, and Turkey) and China and Indonesia take an active part in this grouping as well.

It has come across as a grouping that uses procedural obstacles to stall the negotiations. To be fair, the African Group, Arab Group, and some permanent members have often shared their objections on how to proceed. Besides the core group of the UfC, between 20-30 other Member States privately endorse the idea of longer-term and/or renewable seats. Some of these don't like the strategies the UfC employs in the IGN process.

L69. This grouping of developing countries consists of about 40 Member States: G4 members Brazil and India, 11 African countries, plus small island states, CARICOM members and a handful of Member States from Latin America. At the IGN, Pacific small island states and CARICOM often make separate statements, but their membership largely overlaps with that of L69.

Interestingly, at a C10 meeting held in Oye in 2014, the C10 recommended that no African country should belong to any other grouping, but whether this has been acted upon is unclear to the Center at this time.



L69 was the name of a draft resolution that forced the IGN to start and its endorsers remained active, regularly meeting at India's Mission. The original L69 resolution called for expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories, without specifically referring to veto rights. In 2012, however, the L69 announced at the IGN that it agreed to veto rights extended immediately. Since 2012 - after convergence with the C10 fell through - the grouping continues to have some proponents that firmly believe in veto rights for new permanent members and also includes at least a dozen countries that have been willing to be more flexible, in line with the G4.

Besides the above groupings, the *Arab group* has proposed having its own permanent seat, the *East Europeans* have advocated for a second dedicated non-permanent seat for themselves, and *small island developing states* would like a dedicated cross-regional non-permanent seat in return for their support for new permanent seats. These demands complicate those of the G4 and African groupings.

ACT (Accountability, Coherence, and Transparency) does not participate in the IGN as a group. Its 25 members are Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Gabon, Ghana, Hungary, Ireland, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Maldives, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Portugal, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and Uruguay. Besides this group, Belize, the Netherlands, Spain and Ukraine also participated in the development of the above-mentioned Code of Conduct.